

Who's Who? Speaker Biographies

Dr. Dave Moorhead (Plenary Speaker) is Professor of Silviculture at the University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources and the Co-Director of the Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health. Dr. Moorhead is a native of Louisville, KY and received a B.S. in Forestry from the University of Kentucky; an M.S. in Silviculture/Soils from Mississippi State University, and his Ph.D. in Forest Ecophysiology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has been with the University of Georgia for 26 years providing statewide and regional service/outreach programs for county extension agents, private landowners, foresters and natural resource managers on silviculture, forest vegetation, invasive species and forest health issues, forest regeneration, prescribed fire, and forest management. He is involved in extensive program development in the area of invasive species awareness and management, and conducts workshops across the South on invasive plant identification, pathways of spread in forested/natural ecosystems, and management and control techniques. Dr. Moorhead is active in the SE-EPPC; he serves as the GA-EPPC liaison with the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils, and as a member of the National Network of Invasive Plant Centers (NNIPC, www.invasiveplantcenters.org).

Session Panelists (in alphabetical order)

Sherry Aultman (Session C) is the coordinator of the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) with Clemson University's Department of Plant Industry. This is a combined effort between DPI and the US Department of Agriculture-Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) to conduct surveillance, detection and monitoring for early detection of exotic invasive pests of agricultural crops and natural plant resources.

Charles (Chuck) Bargerion IV (Session D) earned his B.S. (1999) degree in Computer Science from Georgia Southern University and received a M.S. (2004) in Computer Science from Georgia Southwestern State University. He is currently the Information Technology Director for the Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health at the University of Georgia. As I.T. Director, he serves as the webmaster and lead developer for 30 web sites including ForestryImages.org, Invasive.org, Cogongrass.org, SE-EPPC.org, and NAEPPC.org, that received 208 million hits in 2009. His work focuses on the information architecture, database and web site design. He is currently President of the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council.

Betsy Brabson (Session B) is the S.C. coordinator for the Beach Vitex Task Force. She also coordinates the sea turtle project for DeBordieu & Hobcaw beaches in Georgetown, SC as part of the state wide South Carolina sea turtle volunteer monitoring program S.C.U.T.E. Her efforts with both of these groups has been instrumental in eradicating large amounts of beach vitex from sea turtle nesting beaches in Georgetown County, restoring the native dune vegetation, and engaging and education hundreds of community members and visitors. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and has a B.A. in Studio Art. She is originally from Charlotte and moved to Georgetown in 1990 with her husband and 2 children.

Kim Counts (Sessions A & D) is a native Charlestonian, and works as the stewardship biologist with the ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve. She attended Presbyterian College and received a liberal arts degree in Education in Biology. After college, she worked for Friends of Acadia and led kayak trips in the Gulf of Maine. She then returned to Charleston, where she earned her M.S. in Environmental

Studies at the College of Charleston and interned with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. After graduate school, she took on her current full-time position, which she has held for 2.5 years.

Colette Degarady (Session D) is the Senior Conservation Ecologist with the SC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and is located in the Charleston satellite office. She graduated from Clemson University with a B.S. in wildlife biology and holds a Master's degree from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale in Zoology. She is the president of the Lowcountry Chapter of SC Native Plant Society and treasurer of the SC Exotic Pest Plant Council. She enjoys educating the public about the importance of using native plants in the landscape.

Whitney Jenkins (NC State Summary, Session B) Whitney has a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Florida and a Master of Environmental Management in Coastal Environmental Science from Duke University. She started working for the NC National Estuarine Research Reserve in 2002 as coordinator of their Coastal Training Program. Her main duties are coordinating workshops and writing technical brochures to educate coastal decision-makers on various environmental issues, including conservation planning, stormwater management and resource protection.

Dr. George Kessler (Session B) is an Emeritus Professor of Forestry and Natural Resources who retired from Clemson University in 2003. He has been reemployed by Clemson for special projects on several occasions. One of these activities was to develop and lead a Cogongrass Task Force for South Carolina in 2008 and 2009. He worked closely with Steve Compton of the Department of Plant Industries at Clemson and With SCEPPC to conduct two very successful volunteer staffed Cogongrass surveys where thousands of hours were donated each year.

Emily Montgomery (FL State Summary, Session A) studied Anthropology at the University of Florida where her study focus was on how indigenous people related to their environments and the effects of exposure to industrialized nations. She began her environmental career in 2007 with an internship with the Nature Conservancy to help structure and implement a local survey of invasive plants on public managed lands for the First Coast Invasive Working Group (FCIWG). In April 2008 she joined the GTM NERR and continued to work with the FCIWG. Since July of 2009 she has been a part of the Coastal Training Program at GTM NERR.

Dr. John Nelson (Session D) is the Curator of the A.C. Moore Herbarium with the University of South Carolina's Department of Biological Sciences, where he is also a professor of biosystematics, floristics, and plant geography. Since he became the Curator in 1990, the herbarium has more than doubled its collections, and it remains one of the oldest and largest collections in the Southeast with more than 100,000 pressed plant specimens and a repository for nearly every botanical species found in South Carolina. The Herbarium remains committed to public service through a formal offering of free plant identifications and a weekly "Mystery Plant" newspaper column. Dr. Nelson holds a Ph.D. in biological sciences from Florida State University, a Master's degree in botany from Clemson University, and a Bachelor's degree in biology from the University of South Carolina.

Matt Nespeca (Session C) is a product manager for Nufarm Americas Inc., an international manufacturer of herbicides, insecticides and fungicides, with a broad portfolio of products that are used in invasive plant control and natural area management. Matt has a B.S. in Forest Resource Management from Auburn University, and a M.S. in Forest Biology from Virginia Tech. He spent 7 years working for American Cyanamid and BASF, and held sales, technical service and marketing positions in forestry,

specialty products and wood preservation. Prior to his employment with Nufarm Americas, Matt spent 5 years working for the South Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and as a vegetation management consultant. Matt is on the board of both the South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant Council, and the South Carolina Vegetation Management Association.

Dr. Jennifer Plunket (SC State Summary, Session C) is the Stewardship Coordinator at the North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR, where she coordinates research and community education activities to protect the natural resources of the North Inlet and Winyah Bay estuaries. She earned a Ph.D. in Oceanography and Coastal Studies from Louisiana State University and a B.S. in Marine Science and Biology from Coastal Carolina University.

Nicole Saladin (Session C) is the Coastal Training Program Coordinator at the North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR in Georgetown, SC. She conducts science-based continuing education and training programs for coastal decision makers along SC's Grand Strand on a variety of coastal and natural resource issues, including stormwater management, low impact development, and wetlands. Nicole has a Master's degree in Coastal Environmental Management from Duke University, and a B.S. in Marine Science and Biology from the University of Miami.

Stefanie Simpson (Session D) earned a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Clemson University. She currently serves as the ACE Basin Coastal Training Program Intern, where she assists the CTP Coordinator with the planning and implementation of CTP workshops and other efforts. She is a degree candidate in College of Charleston's Master of Environmental Studies program, and her thesis is themed around CTP initiatives with coastal decision makers to address shoreline change in the Beaufort region of South Carolina.

Suzanne VanParreren (GA State Summary, Session B) has been the Coastal Training Program Coordinator for the Sapelo Island NERR since 2003. She is a biologist who has worked in the southeastern estuarine ecosystems for the past 16 years. She has received a B.S. in Nursing from Florida State University, and a B.S. in Biology from the College of Charleston. As CTP Coordinator, she works with local governments and agencies to provide them with the most current scientific information available through professional training programs, in order to help them make the most informed decisions involving Georgia's coastal natural resources.

Dr. Randy Westbrook (Session C) has served since 1979 as an Invasive Species Prevention Specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as the Department of Interior, and is currently with the US Geological Survey. He received his B.S. (1976) and M.S. (1978) in Biology from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. (1989) in Botany and Weed Science from N.C. State University. Dr. Westbrook is working with numerous interagency groups to develop a National Early Detection and Rapid Response System for Invasive Plants in U.S.

Kari Whitley (Session A) has been working in the horticulture industry for 16 years. She earned a B.S. in Horticulture (1999) and an M.S. in Plant Pathology (2001) from the University of Georgia. She has extensive experience in garden centers, production greenhouses, and wholesale nurseries. She is the owner of Scout Horticultural Consulting, and has taught courses at Trident Technical College and Horry-Georgetown Technical College, and lectures widely. She serves on the board of the SC Exotic Pest Plant Council and the Charleston Horticultural Society, and is a member of the SC Native Plant Society.